

Living in Wonder!
Christmas 2009 Perspective
Slide Notations

The Story of Christmas...

Now the birth of Jesus began like this... A young girl named Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph. An angel appeared to Mary saying, "You have been chosen by God for a great blessing!" When she saw and heard him she was troubled, and wondered what was coming next! "Don't worry Mary, you are the favored one of God... you are going to conceive and have a son... and you will call His name Jesus! He is going to be great and will be called the Son of God and God is going to give Him the throne of His ancestor David and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there will be no end..." "How can this be true since I am a virgin?" And the angel said, "The Holy Spirit will overshadow you and you will conceive the One who will be called the Son of God!" At that Mary said, 'Let it be just as you have said!' Now when Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant he determined to break things off. Because he loved her and didn't want her to be publicly exposed or put at risk he had decided to do it privately, quietly. While he was still thinking how this could best be done, he dozed off. Immediately an angel appeared to him in a dream saying, "Joseph, heir of David, don't hesitate to take Mary as your wife. She hasn't sinned. The seed in her womb was placed by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son that you will name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins..." All of this was right in line with Isaiah's prophecy, "a virgin will conceive and birth a son and they will call Him Emmanuel, God with us!" Then Joseph waking up did what the angel from the Lord had told him; the wedding was back on and they became husband and wife...! There was a lot of activity during this same time! Wise men from the east saw a star at its rising and interpreting it as a sign of the birth of the great Messiah, they followed the star to Jerusalem. There they made inquiry about the new king's birth and were directed to Bethlehem. Because it was also the year of a national census and taxation Joseph and a very pregnant Mary were making their way south from Nazareth of Galilee to Joseph's hometown of... Bethlehem! While they were there she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapping him up tightly because she had Him in an outdoor manger. There were shepherds in nearby fields watching over their flocks. At His birth an angel showed up and the area around them lit up with the glory of God and they were afraid! The angel said, "Fear not, I proclaim good things, joyful things for all people to hear... the Savior you have been waiting for has been born in the City of David and this is how you will know you've found the right one, He will be wrapped up tightly, laying in a manger!" And suddenly they saw their angel surrounded by multitudes of heavenly angels praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest places and on earth, peace to men of good will!' As the vision faded away the shepherds said, "let's go see if what we have been told is true!" And when they found Him, just like the angel said, they went and told everyone they could find about the baby! And everyone who heard it was filled with wonder. Right about this time the Wise Men from the East found him in His mother's arms and came, fell down and worshipped, opened their treasures and gave Him gifts! But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart! At His dedication in the Temple a very old man named Simeon, who had the promise that he would not die without seeing the Lord's Christ, saw Jesus and took Him up in his arms saying, "Now I can die, I have seen with my own eyes, the salvation of God!" And Joseph and Mary both marveled at what was being said. And Anna, a prophetess who prayed and fasted day and night, came and said the same things about Jesus being the Redeemer! Then Joseph warned in another dream that Herod would try to kill Jesus, took the child and His mother to Egypt and was there until the wicked king died. In another dream he was instructed to return and settle in Nazareth, fulfilling the prophecy that He would be called a Nazarene...

It's a Great Story...

1. Told at a time when "the whole world was being taxed!" **Lk 2.1** *Certain there was more than one person there saying, "God needs to send our Redeemer now and get us out of here!"*

2. About The Birth of the Savior... **v6,7** *God watching over the times of men and sending His Son at the right time... Gal 4.4*

3. That becomes good tidings, not just a seasonal tide, of great joy to all people **v10**; *'Praise, honor and glory to God in Heaven! It's peace (and prosperity) to men of good will!'* **v14**

Euangelizo: good news!

Megas chara: Mega delight/gladness/cheer!

Anthropos eudokia: to people who desire, delight, are satisfied (in the Lord).

4. About people who now have a whole new way of living! **v25-32, 36-38** *Waiting/yearning is over, "The Defender, the Light and Glory of God" v32, "The Downfall and Resurrector" v34, "The Ransomer" is here! v38* Entrance to God... intimacy; Life of faith... adventure; Dominance over darkness... conquest; Life w/Hope, Love, Purpose...

It's a Great Story... but of all the ways to approach Christmas... Mary and Joseph's wonder in times they couldn't understand/very important!

Lk 2.19 "This isn't the way things are supposed to be..." but Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart! **v33** "That was weird..." and Joseph and Mary marvelled...

v51 "Really?" but Mary kept all these sayings in her heart!

We see in them believing hearts... dwelling in simple faith... dealing w/out-of-this-world truths regarding Jesus... waiting w/confident patience for the time when God lets them "see" the mysterious things they've perceived through a dark glass!

Christmas 2009 let us be the people who restore the mystical to the church of Jesus!

By Mystical... Not the new age, guru-doesn't-tell, cultic weirdness mysticism... But an honest and open approach to God and His Word that says, "I don't know it all... there is always the musterion!"

"There are things I must just wait for God to reveal to me!" And I'm not going to blurt out/guess an answer!

Too many times what we think we know gets in the way of God revealing what we need to know now!

So many times our mind and senses shut out what the Spirit of God wants to say to us in our times of "wonder!"

The Wonder of it All...

Three times the scripture infers that they are being confronted by more than they can take in/one time... Needing time to process/see – in hearts!

Too often if we can't answer, 'what is this?' we just make something up/head... Too often if 'troubled' we just blurt something out/unprepared heart... Worst scenario: we throw our hands up like there is no answer!

A Gift worth Giving...

"Is it possible?" *'You know Lord...'* **Ezekiel 37.3**

"What do you know?" *'You tell me... I will not utter what I do not understand!'* **Job 42.3**

"What will you do?" *'I will wait on the Lord!'* **Ps27.14, 37.34 Pr20.22 Is40.31, 49.23 Lam3.26**

Gifts worth Giving...

“Will you go in My name?” **Mk16.15** *‘Obedience to His mission!’*

“Will you lay hands on the sick?” **Lk10.9** *‘Faith in His power!’*

“Will you acknowledge Me before men?” **Mt10.19-39** *‘Trust in His presence!’*

“Will you follow Me?” **J6, 21.22** *‘Faithfulness to the end!’*